

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 713

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

UNCLAS QUEBEC 239

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: FEDERAL LIBERALS MOVING TO QUEBEC

1. AS ELECTION FEVER IN QUEBEC GROWS IN ANTICIPATION OF POSSIBLE NOVEMBER ELECTION, THERE ARE WIDESPREAD REPORTS THAT BOURASSA IS ATTEMPTING REPLACE SOME SHOPWORN LIBERAL CANDIDATES WITH NEW, MORE ATTRACTIVE FACES. SOME REPORTS ESTIMATE AS HIGH AS 10 FEDERAL MP'S MIGHT BE LURED TO PROVINCIAL SEATS. FORMER FEDERAL MINISTERS JEAN MARCHAND AND BRYCE MACKASEY ARE MOST PROMINENT PERSONALITIES MENTIONED. IT IS ASSUMED BOTH WOULD BE PRIME CANDIDATES FOR INCLUSION IN CABINET WHICH ALSO BADLY NEEDS SOME NEW FACES. MARCHAND, IT IS ASSUMED, WOULD RUN IN ONE OF QUEBEC CITY'S RIDINGS, POSSIBLY LOUIS-HEBERT WHERE HE WOULD OPPOSE P.Q. STRATEGIST ILAUDE MORIN.

2. MACKASEY IS BEING COURTED, ACCORDING IAN MACDONALD OF HONTREAL GAZETTE, TO HELP SHOREUP BOURASSA'S BADLY SAGGING ANGLOPHONE FLANK IN MONTREAL. HE ALLEGEDLY WOULD RUN FROM HIS VERDUN FIEFDOM WITH PRESENT PROVINCIAL INCUMBENT, LUCIEN CARON, SHIFTING TO NEIGHBORING ST. ANNE RIDING WHICH RENIGADE LIBERAL, GEORGE SPRINGATE, MAY VACATE IN FAVOR OF A "WEST ISLAND" CONSTITUENCY.

3. OTTAWA MP'S, SERGE JOYAL AND PIERRE DE BANE, HAVE BEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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MENTIONED AS AMONG PROMINENT BACKBENCHERS BEING WOODED BY

BOURASSA. YVES BERNIER IN YESTERDAY'S LE SOLEIL SAID LIBERALS ARE ATTEMPTING INDUCE JOYAL TO OPPOSE SITTING MEMBER FOR PROVINCIAL MAISONNEUVE-ROSEMONT RIDING, PEQUISTE ROBERT BURNS.

4. COMMENT: INCLUSION PROMINENT FEDERAL POLITICIANS AS CANDIDATES WOULD CERTAINLY STRENGTHEN LIBERAL CHANCES IN AN ELECTION. QUEBEC LIBERALS THEMSELVES MAY VIEW PERSONAL AND PARTY PROSPECTS IN QUEBEC AS MORE PROMISING THAN THOSE IN OTTAWA AS FEDERAL LIBERAL POPULARITY WITH VOTERS SINKS TO LOW POINT IN OPINION POLLS AND PROSPECTS FOR APPOINTMENT TO CABINET POSTS IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ARE FORECLOSED BY RECENT CABINET RESHUFFLE. MACKASEY, IN PARTICULAR, COULD REVIVE BADLY TARNISHED LIBERAL IMAGE AMONG NEGLECTED ANGLOPHONE VOTERS WHO COULD PROVIDE CRUCIAL BALANCE IN CLOSE PROVINCIAL ELECTION. REPORTEDLY, TRUDEAU AND BOURASSA HAVE "NO-RAIDING" AGREEMENT. THIS COULD LIMIT NUMBERS AND PERSONALITIES WHO MIGHT BE AVAILABLE FOR SHIFT TO PROVINCIAL POLITICS. TRUDEAU, PRESUMABLE, WOULD NOT NOW WELCOME NUMBER OF BYE-ELECTIONS FOR VACATED QUEBEC FEDERAL SEATS.
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